



MEMORANDUM

TO: Heritage Preservation Commission
FROM: Brian Schaffer, 612.673.2670
DATE: February 18, 2014
RE: National Register of Historic Places Nomination – Lake Harriet Methodist Episcopal Church, 4401 Upton Ave S

Background

On January 6, 2014 the Minnesota Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO) sent the Minneapolis Heritage Preservation Commission a letter requesting comments on the nomination of the former Lake Harriet Methodist Episcopal Church to the National Register of Historic Places. The form was prepared by Tammy Lindberg of Lindberg Consulting (Attachment A). The property is located at 4401 Upton Avenue S in Linden Hills. It is currently known as the Lake Harriet Spiritual Center.

As a Certified Local government, the Commission is required by federal law to participate in the National Register nomination process as follows:

- Afford the public a reasonable opportunity to comment on the nomination;
- Prepare a report as to whether or not the subject property is eligible for National Register listing; and
- Have the chief local elected official (the Mayor) submit this report and his/her recommendation to the Minnesota State Historic Preservation Officer within sixty days of notice from the SHPO.¹

Previous Reviews

The Lake Harriet Methodist Episcopal Church has been included in previous survey efforts. The 2005 CLG Survey of Southwest Minneapolis recommended that the property is “individually eligible for local and/or national register designation.” See inventory sheet (Attachment B)

¹ More than a simple comment letter, this report provides the City with significant decision making power in the matter. If both the Commission and the chief local elected official recommend that the subject property not be nominated to the National Register, the SHPO shall take no further action, unless within thirty days of the receipt of such recommendation by the SHPO an appeal is filed with the State. If such an appeal is filed, the State shall follow the procedures for making nomination pursuant to established procedures. Even then, the City’s report and recommendations are included with the nomination submitted by the State to the Keeper of the National Register.

Nomination Review

To be eligible for the National Register of Historic Places, a property must be significant in a given context and retain its integrity, defined as its ability to communicate that significance.

Significance

The nomination has identified that Lake Harriet Methodist Episcopal Church meets National Register Criteria C, the property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction. The area of significance is Architecture. The nomination states that the period of significance in 1916, the year the church was constructed.

The nomination focuses on the Classical Revival architectural style of the Church. The nomination states:

“Its [the Church’s] remarkable integrity of original materials and rarity of style in a primarily residential setting, as an ecclesiastical structure, make it unique among the Classical Revival buildings in Minneapolis. While there are other Classical Revival style buildings located in Minneapolis, very few extant examples were built in the Ionic order, or as an ecclesiastical building, as Classically inspired structures mainly as civil works.”

The nomination represents a thorough description of the Church and attempts to place the Church’s Classic Revival architecture in the context of the City Beautiful Movement in Minneapolis. The nomination references the *Plan of Minneapolis* that was developed by Edward Bennett between 1910 and 1917 for context that partially inspired the architectural style of the Church that was constructed in 1916. The nomination references the Lake Harriet Water-Gate that was called for the *Plan of Minneapolis* and the Lake Harriet Pavilion (1904) as examples of the influence of the City Beautiful Movement that extended to the Linden Hills area and influenced the architecture of the Church.

CPED appreciates the local and national context that the nomination draws on for influence of the architecture of the Church. As noted above, the nomination references the significance and rarity of Classic Revival style building for ecclesiastical buildings as well as the rarity of the Ionic order of the style. CPED believes the nomination could benefit from additional analysis and context of the use of Classical Revival style in the ecclesiastical buildings in Minneapolis. The First Church of Christ Scientists at 614 East 15th Street, a locally and nationally designated property, is one extent example in Minneapolis. Additional analysis of how the Lake Harriet Methodist Episcopal Church’s features embody and demonstrate the architecture of the building as well as more robust evaluation of the Ionic order columns identified as a differentiating element of this building from other Classical Revival style buildings would further increase support the efforts of the nomination.

Integrity

The nomination provides a thorough description of the Church's features and demonstrates that the Church retains many of its aspects of integrity.

Staff Recommendation

The Nominator has prepared nomination that indicates their consideration of the subject property's significance. Staff applauds their investigation, and encourages its continuance. CPED recommends that the Commission adopt this CPED report (with suggestions for additional research), approve the nomination, and direct staff to transmit a letter summarizing the report to the State Historic Preservation Officer.

Attachments

- A. National Register of Historic Places Nomination prepared by Lindberg Consulting
- B. 2005 HPC Building Inventory Form